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312 [493] with the household marks of the families which are allowed to used the particular canal concerned in turn--, the screeching ox cart whose two wheels are two meters high because of the muddy roads, and which is drawn by the animals driven on by the goad and harnessed with a yoke on the nape of their necks; the wooden plow whose slade 501 and handle are both of one piece (Figure 9); the swimming bag made of a goat's skin that is blown up and tied to the front of the body, and the raft made of four such skins and a netting of intertwined osier switches, upon which the swimmer puts his clothes bundle (Figure 6). For the rest the people avail themselves of simple and double canoes, with or without side boards that raise the edge of the boat, with or without flanking beams that are nailed to the boat as floaters designed to maintain the equilibrium (Figures 7 and 8); plank boats also occur. To husk the corn a mat of intertwined switches is placed on top of four posts rammed into the ground, and the corn cobs are then beaten with sticks one and one-half meters long, until the kernels have all fallen 411 to the ground through the plaited meshes (Figure 11). The long flint-locks, which are quite often beautiful old heirlooms, have only survived still in the south; they are being replaced by the modern repeating rifles, the pistols, and the handjars, the knife with the bone handle 221 of the shank of a cow, and the revolvers. The Albanians are to a 241 large extent farmers and in part migrating herders who commute back and forth between their winter quarters in the plains towards the Adriatic, where they work their fields, and their summer settlements on the highland pastures to which they return after they have finished working [312] the fields. During wanderings in the highlands they rub last year's mountain snow on sheets of rock that have been scorched by the sun, [202] in order to get water. The extensive settlement of the mountains has given rise to the development of a good signalling system by means ● 183 of shooting and shouting and their transmission. Certain old customs have been preserved that bespeak a life in firmly joined group combinations. To these belong the abducting of the bride, bride purchasing, the engagment of children, sworn blood brotherhood, and revenge for [162] murder. The Albanians are approximately seven-tenths Mohammedan, 771 two-tenths Greek Orthodox, and one-tenth Roman Catholic. Nevertheless, all kinds of remnants have been preserved attesting an earlier spiritual life of the people which practiced a clairvoyant contemplation of supernatural powers and processes, basing its knowledge and its actions on the basis of its magical connection with these mysterious forces. Thus their practices and beliefs included: building sacrifices,

[See 1: Karutz, E1 Europe, cat. 116, p. 69a -- Analyst]

2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910)1928 EG1 Albania EG1

should strike the next man and the blow would entail a fight and blood. Women should walk the length of a distaff apart—they usually spin as they go—lest a blow given should draw their men into a fight.

Neither man nor woman must pass between two persons who have just been speaking together, for (? in some occult manner) this will cause them to quarrel. So strong is this belief that once in a small hut a woman gripped me by the shoulder, dragged me out, and squeezed herself between me and the wall in order to avoid passing between me and Marko, where there was plenty of room. Lek, I was told, had so ordained. I like to think that he did his best by means of house-burning and fines to diminish the very ancient custom of "blood," and that he did not deserve the Pope's excommunication.

As we have seen, house-burning and fine are the only punishments under the Canon. Nevertheless, by decree of the council of the whole tribe the death penalty can be inflicted. In February 1912 an amazing case of wholesale justice was reported to me which had recently taken place in Mirdita. A certain family of the Fandi bairak had long been notorious for evil-doing—robbing, shooting, and being a pest to the tribe. A gathering of all the heads condemned all the males of the family to death. Men were appointed to lay in wait for them on a certain day and pick them off; and on that day the whole seventeen of them were shot. One was but five and another but twelve years old. I protested against thus killing children who must be innocent and was told: "It was bad blood and must not be further propagated." Such was the belief in heredity that it was proposed to kill an unfortunate woman who was pregnant, lest she should bear a male and so renew the evil. Three shots which missed were fired at her; she rushed to a man and called on him to protect her. He took her under his besa and she was spared.

A case of private "justice," though it took place in South Albania at Postenani, a small isolated village, and so is not connected with the Canon of Lek, is so singular that it should be recorded. I stayed some days at the village and, when leaving, a crowd gathered to see me start. When we were on the way my guide asked if I had noticed a woman who had stood near the door; I had not. He said it was a pity, as she was a very brave woman and had saved her husband. They owned a house and some land; a child was born to them, and all went well till her husband's brother arrived. He was a bad man, and demoralized the village, not only by starting gambling with card games, but by drinking and teaching very vicious practices to the youth. The woman with dismay saw her husband taken with the gambling craze, playing away his goods, and nearing ruin. Then the child was ill. She prayed her husband to send for a doctor; but the nearest was a whole day's

2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910)1928 EG1 Albania EG1

ride distant, and he replied it would cost too much. The child died. The woman then became desperate, and to save her husband she killed her brother-in-law. I asked, "Did she shoot him herself?" "No, she paid a Turk to waylay him on his way to market." The whole village was glad to be rid of him. Everyone knew she had done it. "But what did her husband say?" "At first he was angry, but he soon saw it was for the best. Now they live happily, but God has not given them another child." "Could he not have been handed over to justice instead of being shot?" "No, he was rich and would have bribed the Turkish authorities, and have been let off and been worse than ever." "Did not the Turkish authorities interfere about the murder?" "No, why should they? It was within the family, and all agreed it was right. She saved not only her husband but the whole village, and was a very brave woman."

3. Montenegro

The first written Code of Laws was drawn up for Montenegro by Vladika Petar I in 1796.

An examination of this Code shows that it is meant to deal with a state of affairs resembling that with which the Canon of Lek Dukagin deals, and is a step in advance. All early accounts of Montenegro show the tribes ceaselessly "in blood" with each other, and the rules and customs identical in most respects with those of the Dukagini. Nor is this surprising, for our examination of the Montenegrin tribes has shown that many are of Vlah and Albanian origin, and that the Montenegrin is not so much a Serb as a Serbized descendant of the older inhabitants.

Vladan Georgevitch, in *Europa i Crnagora* (Belgrade, 1912), gives many documents which show this resemblance of the customs of Montenegro to those of the Dukagini. From that of the Russian, Putchkov, dated March 21, 1760, we learn that the then Vladika Vasili was afraid of his own people and kept near Putchkov as a protection. This shows that in Montenegro, as in Albania, a man could not be shot if with a guest. "The people," he said, "are wild, and without great trouble no order could be made among them, for they recognized no right and knew no law. If any does harm to another, blood is at once taken, and the murderer flies to another district, where he is safe from punishment. Thus a Popovitch of Tzrmnitza Nahia killed a neighbour and, leaving wife and children, fled to Cetinje. They 'destroyed' his house—that is, they pulled off the thatch and pulled out a few stones." He reports that he saw many such houses. "If the murderer is of a powerful house he stays at home, and 'the house' wages war with that of the murdered man till peace is arranged by the headmen or the

[P77-120 blank]

2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910)1928 EG1 Albania EG1

583
577 and ask the girl. The usual answer was that they were too modest. The suggestion seemed to be thought indecent.

581 The fact that both in Montenegro and Albania a word of Turkish
152 origin is used commonly for "to make love" (Montenegrin and Bosnian, "ashikovati"; Albanian, "ashik," lover—"ashari," love) suggests that love-making played little or no part in the marriages of both lands. I heard that the son of an Austrian mother and an Albanian father was betrothed and asked his mother if he was much in love. "O dear, no!" she cried. "Not in the least; he is quite Albanian!"

183 One case only I met in which—perhaps for the first time—a betrothal
583 was broken and the girl left free to marry. She was the niece of Mgr. Premi Dochi, mitred abbot of the Mirdites, a very remarkable man, whose death during the war was an immense loss to Albania.

I passed the night at her father's house. The girl sat sullen and glowering in a corner like a wild cat at bay. No one spoke to her. I asked what was the matter. She had refused to be sent to her betrothed. Her father was furious. Only the abbot's intervention had saved her. He talked the young man into admitting that it was useless to marry a girl who hated him and would probably run away, when another more amenable could be found, and got him to swear that no blood-
581 vengeance should be taken if the girl married another. But the father, enraged, declared often and loudly, "A girl marries to please her house and not for herself"; and rated her till I was sorry I had asked. Awe of the abbot alone had made him yield.

585 *Marriage Ceremonies.*—When the wedding-day is fixed the male relatives of the bridegroom go to fetch the bride. The bridegroom usually does not go. As the tribes are exogamous the distance may be considerable. Sometimes the men of the bride's family take her to a spot half-way and hand her over there. Sometimes she is fetched from her father's house. Moslem girls are always accompanied by one or two female relatives. Christian girls usually are, if the journey is a long one; but not always. In no case does the mother go.

Marriage among the Christians is according to the rites of the Catholic Church.

I was never at a mountain wedding, but was told some local ceremonies. In Klementi the bride, on coming to her husband's home, must throw an apple over the roof, and is given some corn. This recalls the confarreatio of the Romans. She is then led three times round the hearth. All through the mountains I gathered that a bride must enter the house with her right foot first and carry in a male child with her. On marriage the hair of the woman is dyed black and dressed differently from that of a virgin. There are various modes, according to district. In the Maltsia e Madhe the head is shaved in front and over the temples,

2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910)1928 EG1 Albania EG1

583 work to do again. No one thought it unreasonable, and the wedding was postponed till she had finished. I created great horror by saying it would be better to find another man to fit the already made garments.

All the gifts exchanged are keenly scrutinized, and the respective families argue as to whether they have been properly treated.

582 *Forbidden Degrees.*—Among the Catholics, of course, the usual laws have to be observed. But the people maintain far more rigid ones of their own. As we have shown in the chapter on tribes, no couple tracing origin from the same male ancestor, no matter how remote, is marriageable in North Albania, whether they be Christian or Moslem. Neither are those related by "hair-cutting" or by "sworn brotherhood" marriageable.

Priests cannot refuse to marry such if there be no other impediment, but I was assured it was very rarely they were asked to do so. Though I made many inquiries, I heard of but one case of a priest being asked to marry a couple with a remote common ancestor. Being an Albanian
684 tribesman, he thought it very repulsive, but as the pair had cohabited, he
183 consented; nor by Church law could he have refused. The bridegroom was shot soon afterwards by the outraged relatives.

3. The Levirate

587 On one point the tribesman came into severe collision with the
688 Church. He considered it his bounden duty to marry the widow, not only of his brother, but of any male of the house, except his father. In Maltsia e Madhe this custom had died out, and blood-feud arose
[628] between Hoti and Kastrati because a case had occurred, and the Hoti considered their honour blackened. But among the Catholic Dukagini the custom, in spite of most strenuous efforts of the Church, was still common. Among the Moslem tribes and among the Moslems of Scutari I was assured it was almost universal.

[577] From the tribesman's point of view the position was this: A widow left with young children must remain in the family house and rear them. If they are daughters, she can be returned to her own people when they are old enough not to need her. If there is a son, she has the right to live in the house permanently, but she cannot marry outside the house, as no strange man can be brought into it. It would be cruel to condemn a young woman to celibacy; it would not be honourable. Therefore, even though her brothers-in-law were already married by the rites of the Church, one or other of them must take her as wife. The priest in vain called it concubinage. The man said she was his legal wife and his legal wife agreed with the arrangement.

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
EG1 Albania EG1

fashion, a well-scoured copper pan to mix the meal in, a wooden bowl or two, a few horn spoons, a copper *ibrik*, or coffee pot, and a brass lamp. One of the two rooms is used as a storehouse for the maize or grapes, which are spread out and sprinkled with salt in order to preserve them. The other serves as general living and sleeping apartment, where the fire is made on the floor, the smoke escaping through a hole in the roof. Each house has its garden well stocked with fruit and vegetables, and its tobacco plot, surrounded by a high loopholed wall. Each village has, too, its green, in one corner of which is the paved threshing-floor, where the grain is trodden out by horses.

The physical appearance of the women of Albania varies according to the district they inhabit, the tribe to which they belong, and the conditions under which they live. The Skipetars of the Drin and the Gheg and Miridite women of North Albania generally are tall, handsome, and well-made, having good complexions and not infrequently fair hair, which, as the following verse from one of their folk-songs shows, is much admired:—

O maiden so tender,
No pipe of Vizier
Was ever so slender
As thou art, my dear!
The soft silken tresses
Of thy yellow hair,
The glad breeze caresses,
Like flax threads are fair.

They are also dignified in demeanour, capable of undergoing fatigue and hardship, and exceedingly courageous.

7; Amery G-5 (1943-44) 1948 EG1 Albania EG1

628 Anarchy knows no prisons—the most fundamental of social institutions — so that the only punishment inflicted among the tribesmen was death. Here lay the origin of the blood feud; the scourge of life in the mountains and a practice of the deepest social significance. In a community, any crime is an offence against society as a whole, and the appropriate penalties are prescribed in accordance with the law. Under anarchy, however, as in international relations, the importance of a crime lies less in its intrinsic character than in the challenge which it represents to the victim's prestige. All crimes, therefore, be they murder, rape, theft, or merely insult, are of equal weight; and the consideration which a man will receive from his fellows depends upon the speed and violence with which he avenges a wrong. Prestige, however, can only suffer from a public slight; and it was said among the Albanians that though a rough word in company would often lead to a feud of years, a blow unseen by third parties might well be forgotten.

The same considerations of prestige which lay at the root of the blood feuds were the cause of their persistence. The rights and wrongs of a particular vendetta might arouse little interest, but the manner of its prosecution was the public test of the power of the clans concerned. On rare occasions the aggressors might confess their guilt and the aggrieved forgo their pound of flesh for an indemnity in cash or kind. Otherwise the blood feud would be waged, perhaps without passion and with many truces, but relentlessly, sometimes even for generations, until both sides to the dispute were agreed that enough blood had flowed for the account to be closed with honour. The blood feuds were thus both an effect of anarchy, and, by the divisions which they multiplied among the mountaineers, a cause of its perpetuation. To such an extent, indeed, did they dominate the daily life of the Albanians — and naturally, for few things occupy a man's mind so effectively as the fear of sudden death — that, in most issues which arose among them, they took sides according to their feuds rather than their opinions.

• 183 Travellers returning from Albania have been wont to dwell on the famous code of honour, the Law of Lek, which is said to prescribe the rules of the blood feud and the general manners

7: Amery G-5 (1943-44) 1948 EG1 Albania EG1

of the mountaineers. This ancient code of conduct has undoubtedly exercised a restraining influence on the clansmen and helped to soften the grim realities of anarchy. None the less it was our experience that, like other codes of chivalry and laws of war, it was honoured as much in the breach as in the observance. This was perhaps a recent development, born of the crisis of the times or of the influence of Western ideas unaccompanied by Western conditions. Be this as it may, what most impressed us in the way of life of the Albanians was not the stray survivals of their ancient customs but the extent to which they lived without a law at all.

If anarchy was the way, poverty was the standard of their lives. They subsisted mainly from their flocks and upon maize, grown wherever the valleys offered soil for their wooden ploughs to scratch, or traded in the towns against hides and dairy produce. Their fare was simple; their clothing homespun; the forests gave them fuel, and, with the rocks of the mountain, their building materials. They lived, Turkish fashion, on the ground, and, beyond a few rugs, mattresses, and cooking utensils, required no other furniture or amenities. Tobacco, salt, sugar, and coffee, were their luxuries; weapons their chief expenditure and pride.

But besides this pastoral economy there was another source of wealth from which the mountaineers, and especially the chief men among them, drew their strength. Bad communications made coercion difficult, but the poverty of the clans made the power of money great. Elsewhere this might have been of no great moment, but in the Balkans the clashing interests of the Powers afforded frequent opportunities for holding the Central Government to ransom, or indulging in mercenary enterprise on behalf of the foreigner. Such enterprise had ever been a time-honoured means of livelihood among the Albanians; and, if the Eastern Question had caused the ruin of their merchants, it had also created boom conditions for their mercenaries. Such indeed had been the influx of gold and arms into the mountains in the past hundred years that it was perhaps not too much to say that the whole economy and strength of many of the clans had become dependent on subsidies received for "political

2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910)1928 EG1 Albania EG1 ●
Historical Yugoslavia EF2
Balkan Peoples E13
Montenegrins EF5

Some Balkan Taboos. Iron. Hair

H 302 171 175

angry and said: 'Do you dead dogs dare threaten the Roman realm? I will shave off those locks of yours and then cut off your heads.'

"He then imprisoned them for six months and released them terrified, and for some time the Avars submitted to Rome and gave no trouble."

The Nemanja kings, as seen on the frescoes at Dechani, all wore the moustache. Their beards are very small. The hair of the head is completely hidden by the crown.

B 302

To-day in the Balkans the beard is worn almost solely by the Orthodox priesthood and the Moslem dervishes and hodjas. Thus the holy men of both faiths observe the hair taboo.

Laymen in all parts where the modern fashion of clean-shaving has not penetrated always wear the moustache. Perhaps vague memories of the days when the hair was burnt as ultimate disgrace haunt the mind, for the clean-shaven man, I found, was a creature condemned and despised.

M A 302 186

In Krsto's hut I mentioned that my brother was clean-shaven, and the company, abashed, stared at their toes and were speechless. Then someone, deeply shocked, said: "No noble family will give him a wife." And kind old Pope Gjuro, wishing to be polite, said that such things might be done in London, but in Montenegro it was better not to speak of them. Whereupon the repulsive subject was dropped.

M A 183 ● 554 186

In both Albania and Montenegro a hairless man is called by the Turkish word "Chosé." Bald heads in both lands are very rare. I never saw more than a slight thinning on the top. A really bald, shining head is thought an awful thing. We were once discussing the American regulations for emigrants. A Montenegrin who had been to America angrily denounced the injustice of the health inspectors at the landing-place. "I myself," he cried, "saw them allow a man with no hair on the top of his head—a most horrible sight—to pass. And they stopped a poor boy who had only a few little bare spots on his head and said he was diseased!"

H 538 554 302

In old Serbian ballads the hero's moustache is his glory. Mighty fine were these warriors.

> And there came five horsemen clad in black;
> At their head rode a hero upon a raven steed.
> His black moustachios reached below his shoulders
> And hung to the pistols in his sash.
> His breastplate ("toké") glittered through his moustachios
> As doth the moon when fifteen days old
> Shine through the branches of a fir-tree.
> Lo and behold, O my brother Mujo!
> Next to them come three horsemen
> Clad in white cloth and riding upon greys.
> At their head is a warrior on a grey steed,
> And his fair moustachios reach to his shoulders, etc.

113, 183, 563 Albania EGl

[For data on beliefs and customs relative to baptism of Moslems in Albania, see 9: Filipovich, EFl Yugoslavia, category 116, pp. 4-5.]